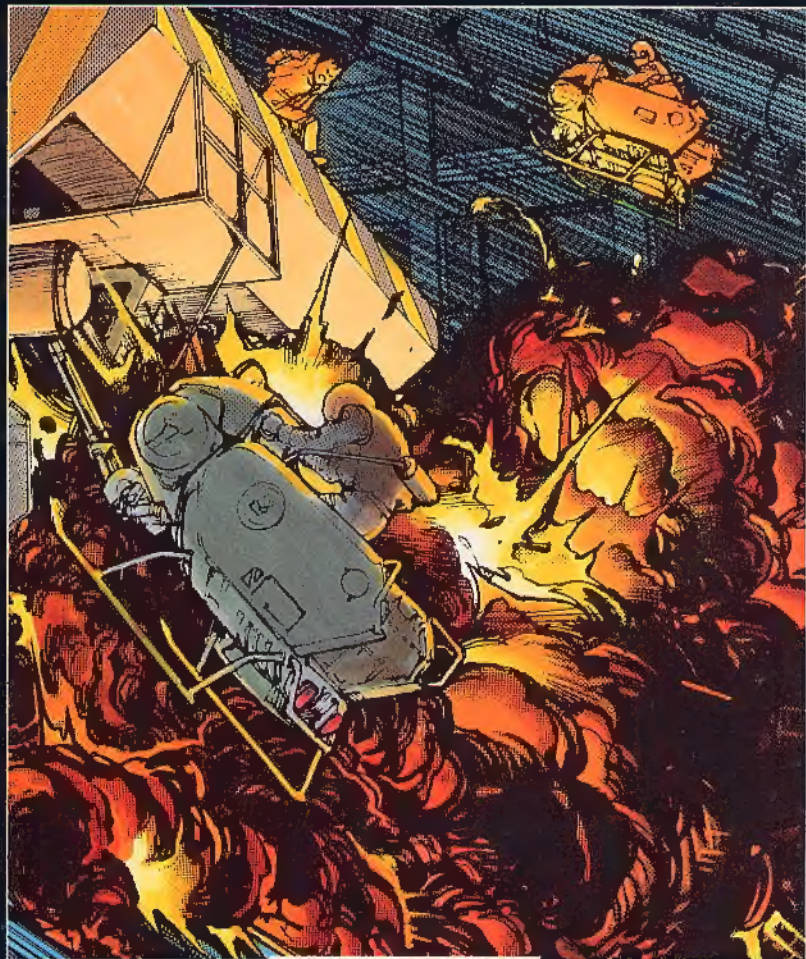


AKIRA 9

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KATSUHIRO OTOMO



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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

CHAPTER 9

STALKERS

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

The year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo**, plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city"—where, thirty-eight years before, the first of the bombs fell.

Kaneda and his friends, teenage delinquents, make an unauthorized motorcycle run into the old city to check out the old site. They encounter a terrified child, known only as **Number 26**, possessing extraordinary telekinetic abilities. During the encounter, the paranormal boy gravely injures **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends. Then, he vanishes.

The next night, at **Harukiya**, a tough local dive, **Kaneda** attempts, unsuccessfully, to pick up a newcomer, **Kay**. In fact, she and her companion, **Ryu**, are part of an underground resistance group dedicated to learning what is happening in the old city and putting a stop to it.

Trouble ensues, and both delinquents and resistance fighters again encounter

Number 26. Then the ominous **Colonel** in charge of the covert operation appears with a secret weapon—**Number 27**, a crippled paranormal child named **Masaru**. **Masaru** astonishes the resistance fighters by addressing **Number 26** as **Takashi**. **Kay** and **Ryu** had previously assumed that **Number 26** was the Colonel's ultimate weapon—the as-yet unseen paranormal giant code-named **Akira**. **Kaneda** is separated from the resistance fighters, but he manages to intercept and hide a pill meant for **Takashi**, who is recaptured by the Colonel's men.

Tetsuo—who following his accident was taken to a hospital by soldiers serving the **Colonel**—is taken from school by the **Colonel** after his recovery. Under the treatments of the Colonel's chief medical officer, **Tetsuo** exhibits powerful telekinetic abilities...and undergoes great pain. Finally, **Tetsuo** breaks out of the Colonel's installation, using his burgeoning powers to slaughter all who oppose him.

Meanwhile, **Kaneda**, trying to learn what is happening to **Tetsuo**, re-encounters the members of the resistance, and is brought back to their



Kaneda



Tetsuo



Kay



Ryu

headquarters. Questioned by **Ryu**, he denies all knowledge of the stolen drug. When soldiers enter the resistance hideout in force, **Kaneda** and **Kay** manage together to escape to **Harukiya**, where the bartender agrees to shelter them. A spy from the Colonel's organization learns of their hideout, but he is caught and left for dead by a resistance fighter.

Kiyoko, another of the psychic children under the Colonel's control, announces that **Akira**—who is asleep, and expected to remain so for some time—is going to awaken in the near future.

At **Harukiya**, **Yamagata** and **Kaneda**'s other friends tell of **Tetsuo**'s new powers and of his bloodthirstiness. **Kaneda** and **Yamagata** lead the local street gangs on an all-out attack to stop **Tetsuo**. Then the **Colonel**, alerted by his informant, arrives at **Harukiya**, and forces the bartender to tell him where the fugitives have gone.

Yamagata and his team corner **Tetsuo** in a warehouse. Most of the gang dies, and **Kaneda** reaches the scene in time to see **Tetsuo** brutally kill **Yamagata**. Enraged, **Kaneda** shoots **Tetsuo**...who survives.

As the **Colonel** arrives,

Tetsuo grabs and swallows the drug **Kaneda** had hidden, apparently dying of an overdose. A few minutes later, the terrible delinquent recovers, more powerful than ever, and the elated **Colonel** rechristens him **Number 41**.

Back at the Colonel's installation, **Tetsuo**'s body shrugs off the effects of his wounds... and his mind continues its descent into madness and evil. Eavesdropping on the **Colonel** and his doctor, he is intrigued to learn that he is not unique, and that other paranormals possess talents he lacks.

Ryu, working undercover at a construction site next to the Colonel's base, meets with **Nezu**, who publicly leads the governmental opposition party but secretly is a resistance leader as well, and they share new evidence on the scale of the **Akira** project. **Nezu**, in turn, consults **Lady Miyako**, the head of a powerful religious cult of which **Nezu** is a leader, **Lady Miyako** who bears the **Number 19** on her hand marking her as one of the Colonel's series, and she warns of impending catastrophes which may be linked to **Akira**.

Kiyoko, **Takashi** and **Masaru** fear **Tetsuo**'s power and



Takashi



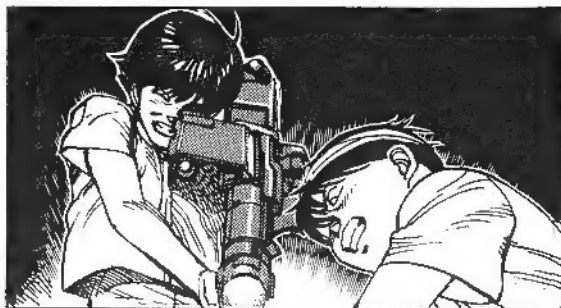
The Colonel



Masaru



Yamagata



discuss plans to hinder him. Then **Kay**—who, like **Kaneda**—has been brought to the installation under guard, escapes, displaying a variety of psychic powers, including telekinesis and teleportation. She attacks **Tetsuo**, almost killing him, and helps **Kaneda** to shake off his guards, acting like a sleepwalker the whole time. As guards close in on the escapees, **Tetsuo** quizzes the doctor about **Akira**, and learns that his chief rival is trapped in cryogenic sleep. During the course of the conversation, the doctor is stunned to learn that **Tetsuo** can now read minds.

Kay, still somnolent most of the time, takes **Kaneda** into the armory where they help themselves to the one weapon that may work against **Tetsuo**—a laser. Meanwhile, the **Colonel** had deduced the source of Kay's new powers—she is being manipulated by **Kiyoko**.

Confronting **Masaru, Takashi** and **Kiyoko**, the **Colonel** is joined by **Tetsuo**, who has learned of his "rivals" by reading the doctor's mind and come to torment them. He recognizes **Takashi** as the one who injured him out on the highway and attacks the three children, forcing them to fight for their lives.

Tetsuo demands to be told **Akira's** location, and the doctor urges the **Colonel** to reveal it, suggesting that **Tetsuo** might be just what they need—a paranormal powerful enough to control **Akira**. When the **Colonel** refuses, **Tetsuo** turns on him, knocking him out. Guided by **Kiyoko**, **Kaneda** and **Kay** reach the nursery and attack. To escape the laser, **Tetsuo** jumps out the window of the skyscraper...landing unhurt in the street below. **Kay** asks **Kiyoko** to reveal the secret of **Akira**, and **Kiyoko** does, telling her that **Akira** is **Number 28**.



Nezu



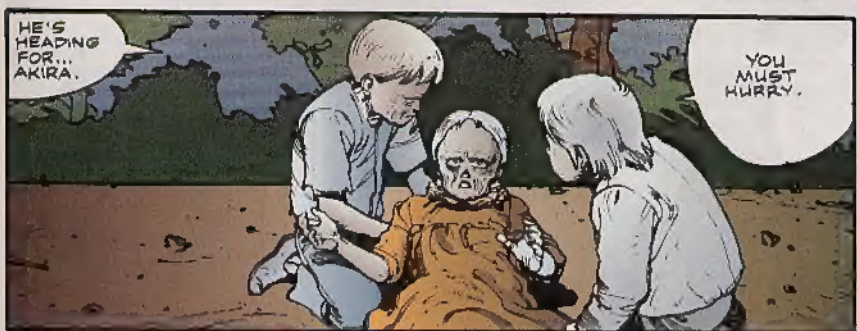
Kiyoko

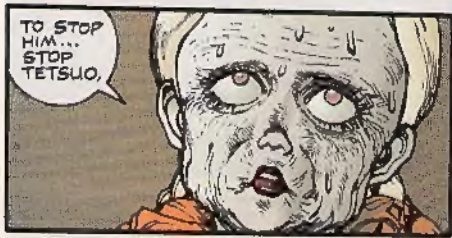
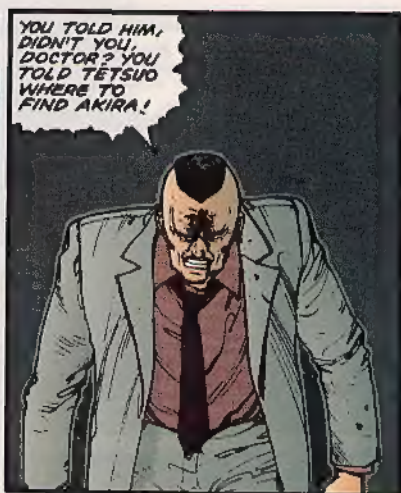


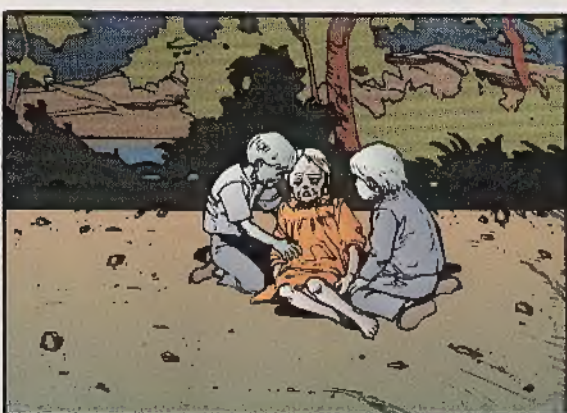
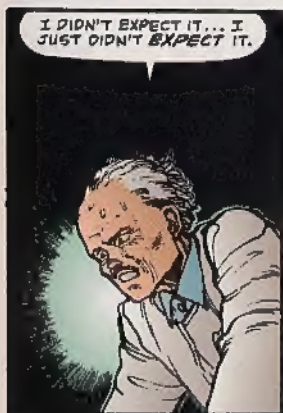
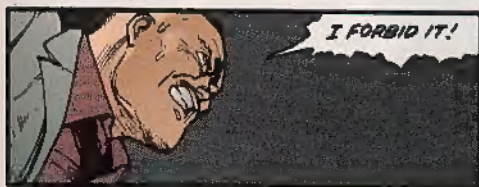
Bartender



Clown

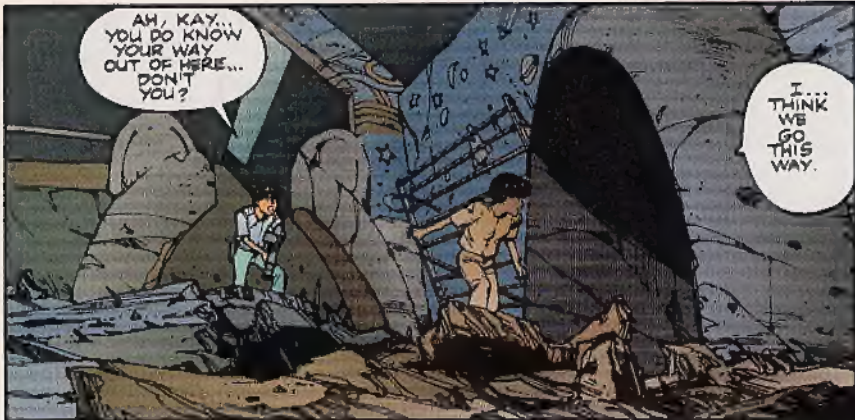




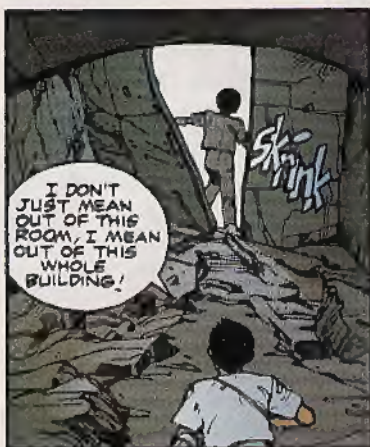


AH, KAY...
YOU DO KNOW
YOUR WAY
OUT OF HERE...
DON'T
YOU?

I
THINK
WE
GO
THIS
WAY.



I DON'T
JUST MEAN
OUT OF THIS
ROOM, I MEAN
OUT OF THIS
WHOLE
BUILDING!



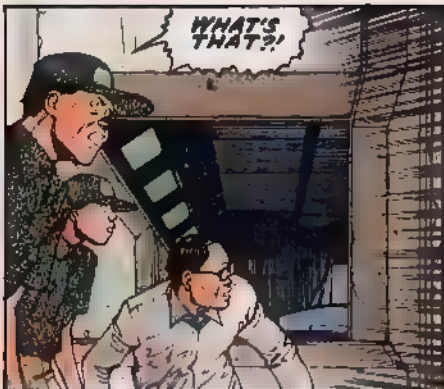
WAIT
A
SEC.



WHAT?!

IS THE COLONEL
IN THERE?!

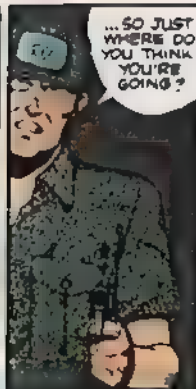




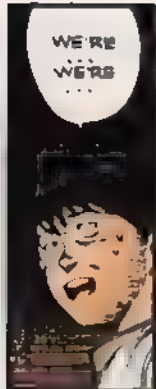
THESE TWO ARE
WEARING
PRISONERS'
UNIFORMS...



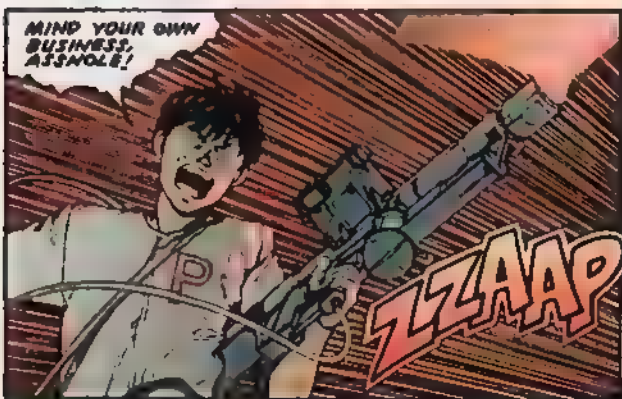
...SO JUST
WHERE DO
YOU THINK
YOU'RE
GOING?



WE'RE
...
WE'RE
...

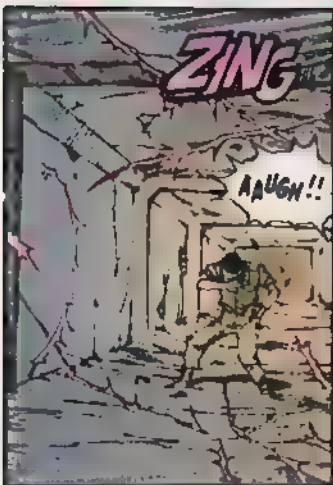


MIND YOUR OWN
BUSINESS,
ASSHOLE!

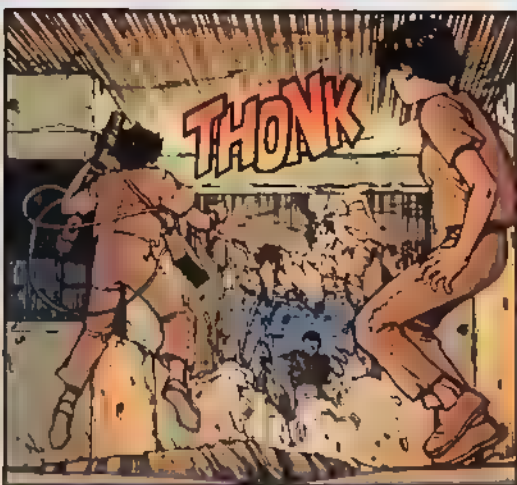


ZING

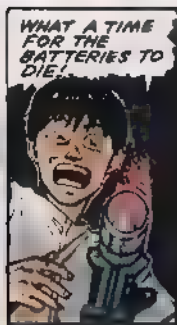
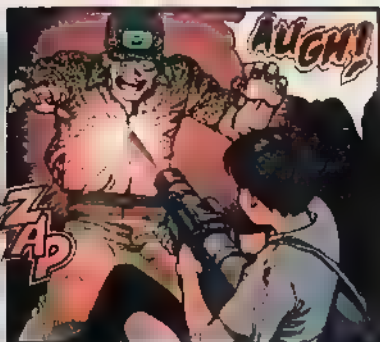
AAUGH!!

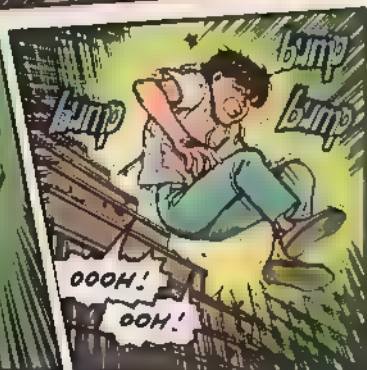
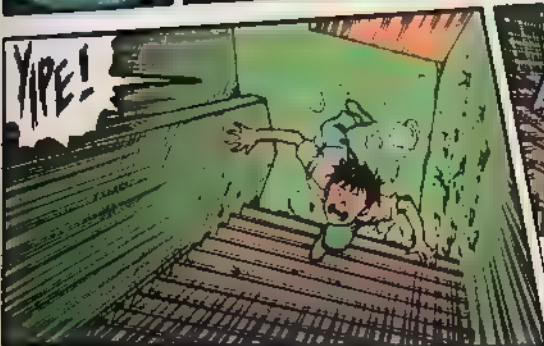
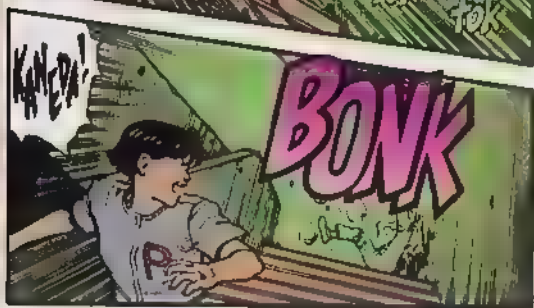


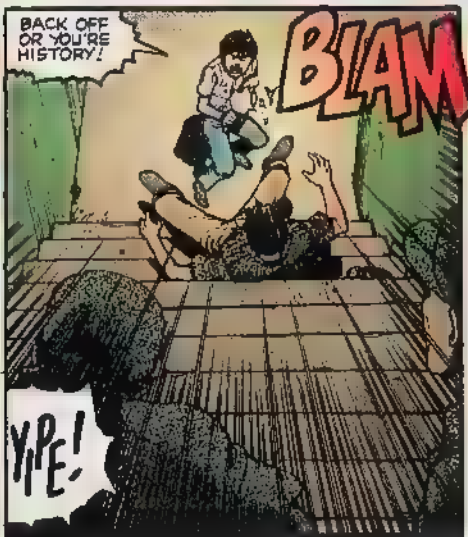
THONK

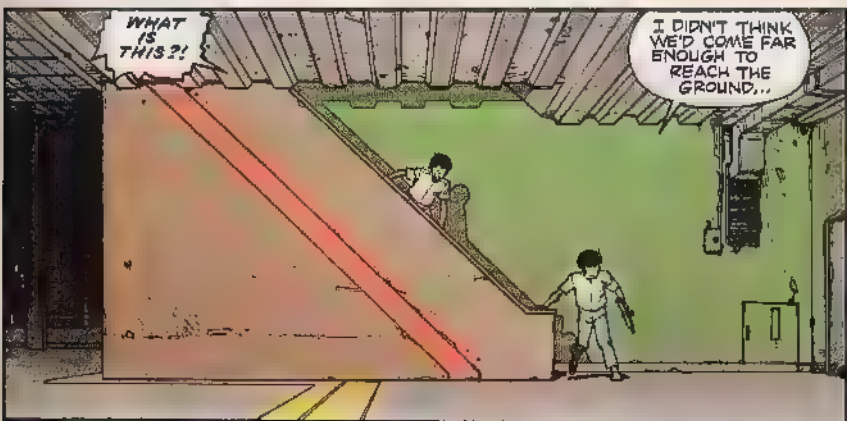
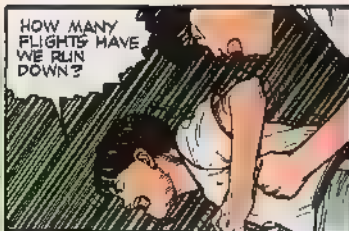




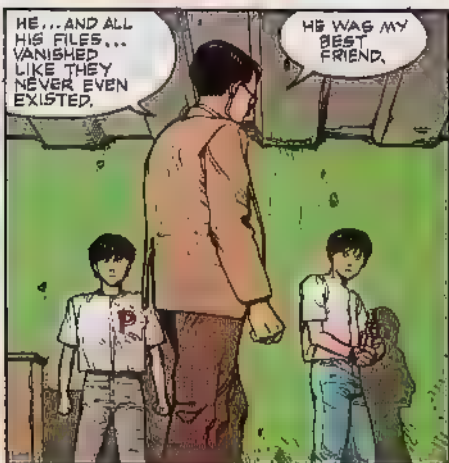
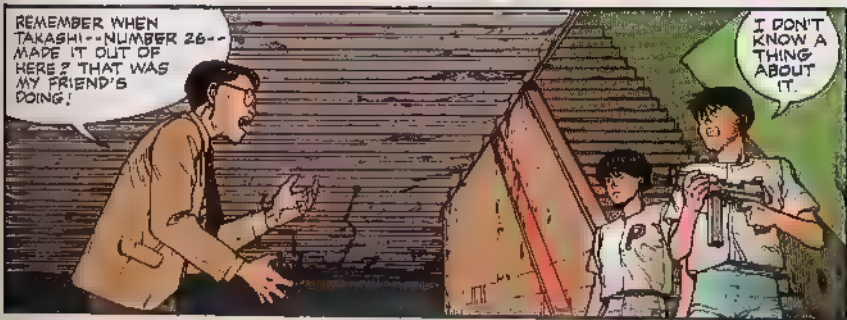
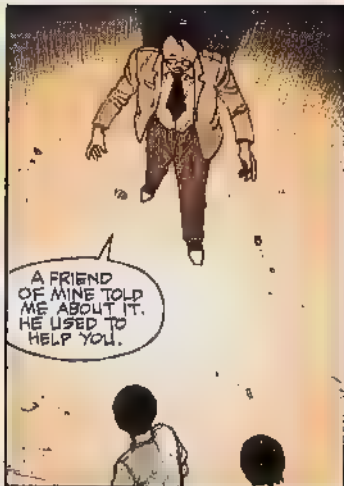


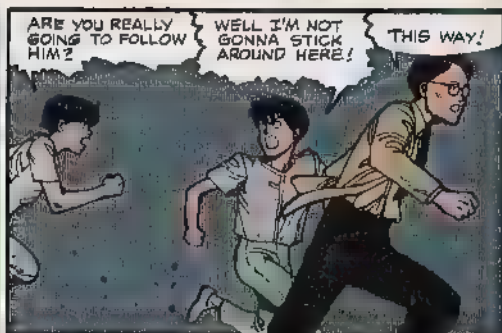
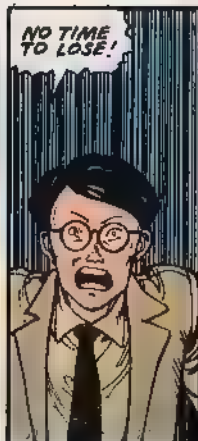
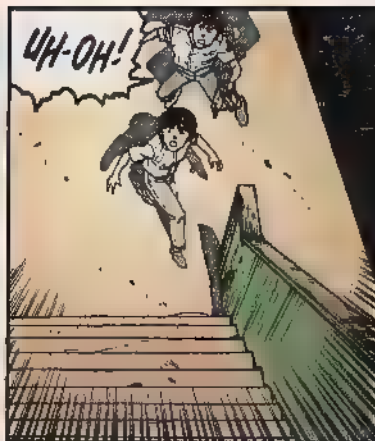
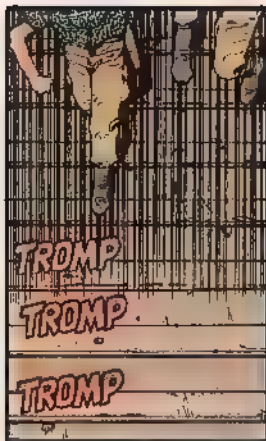


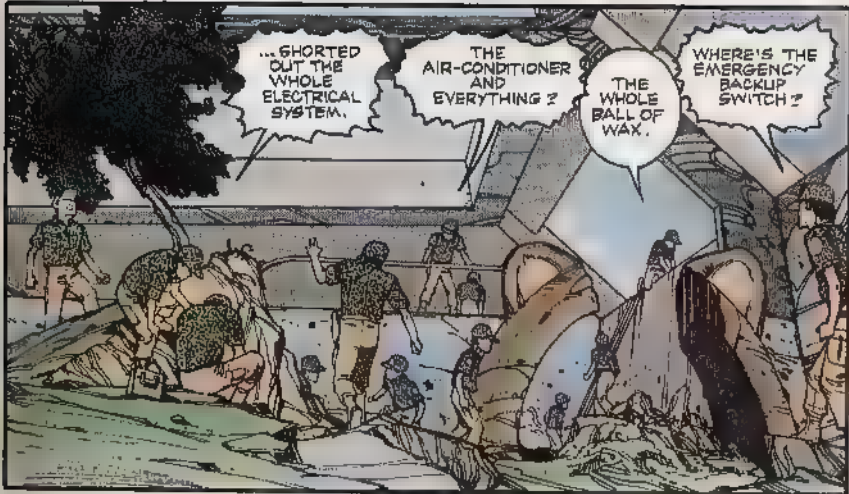










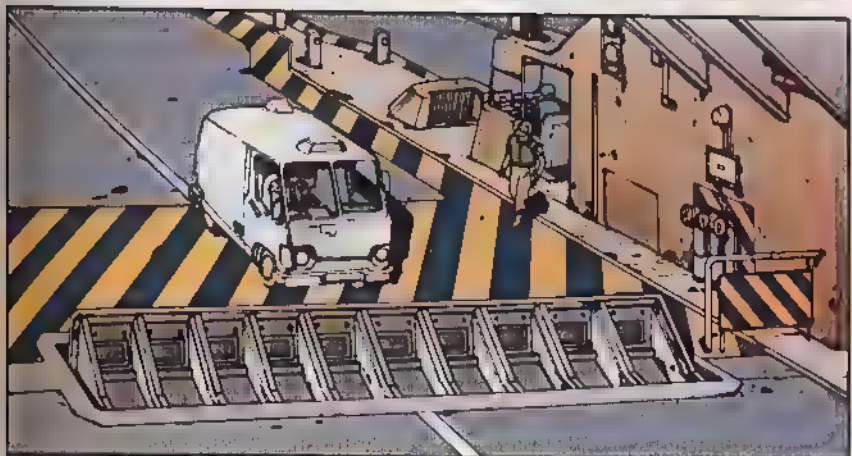
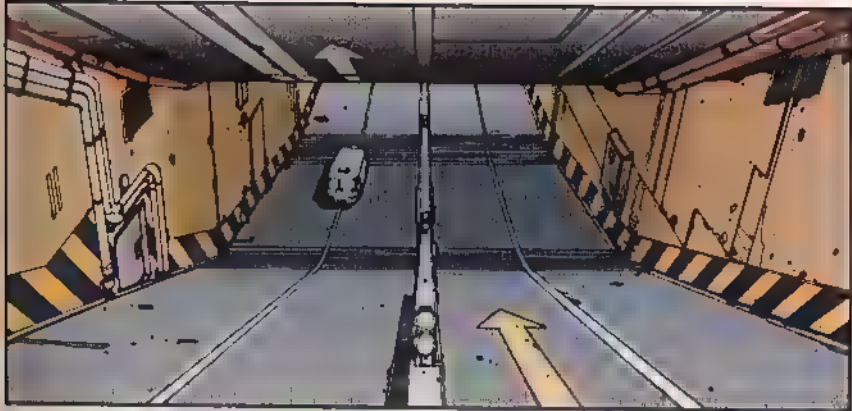


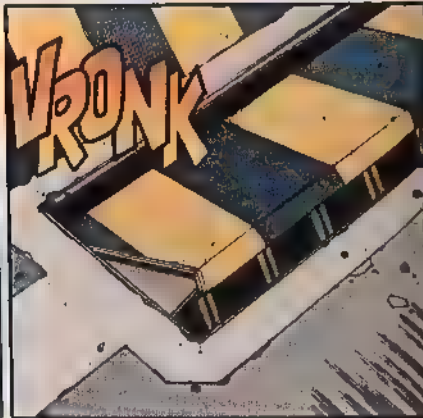
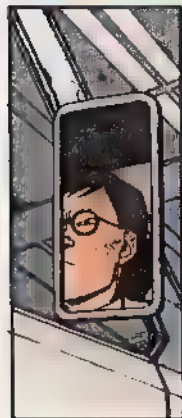
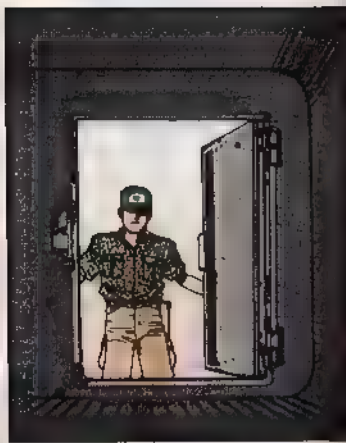
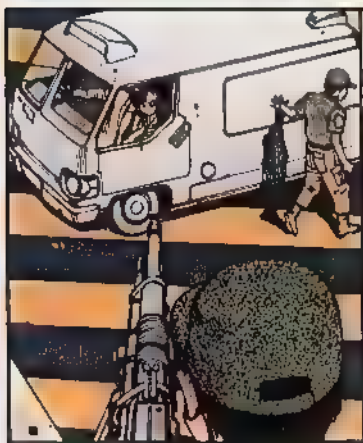
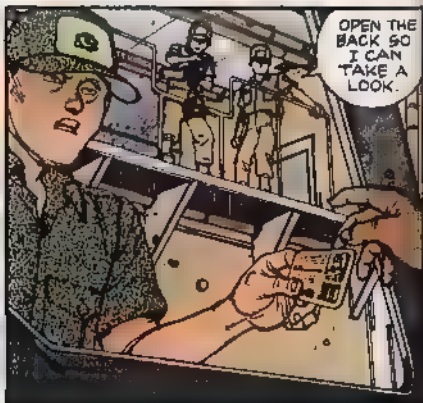
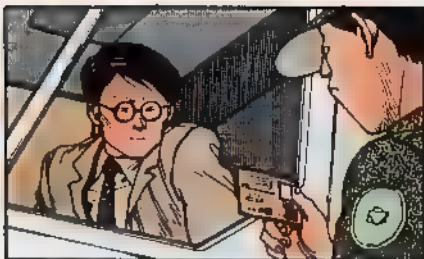
...CONTROL THE
FUTURE.



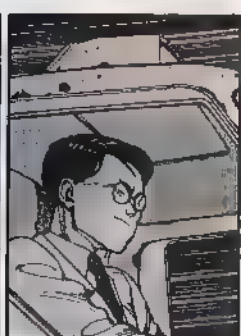
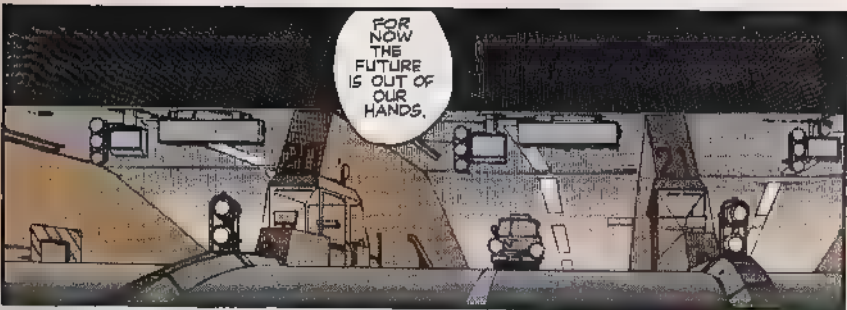
THERE
IS NOT JUST
ONE PATH!





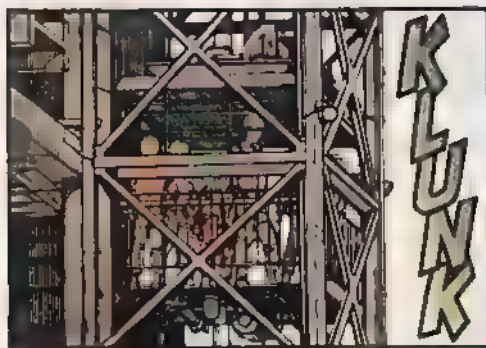


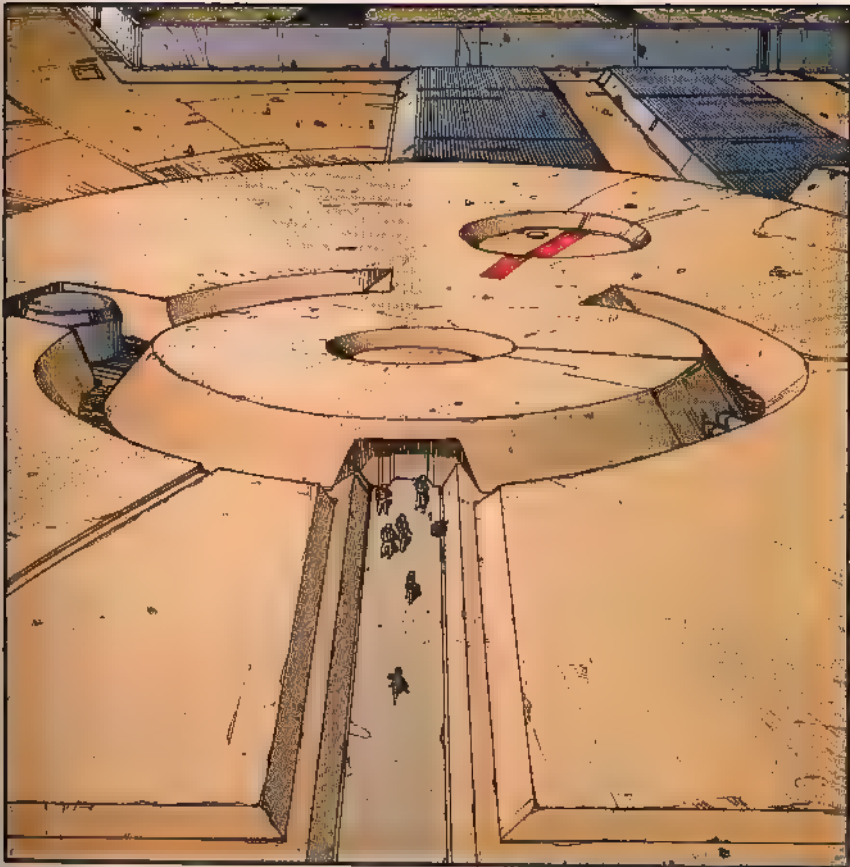
FOR
NOW
THE
FUTURE
IS OUT OF
OUR
HANDS.

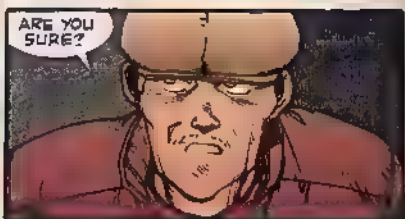
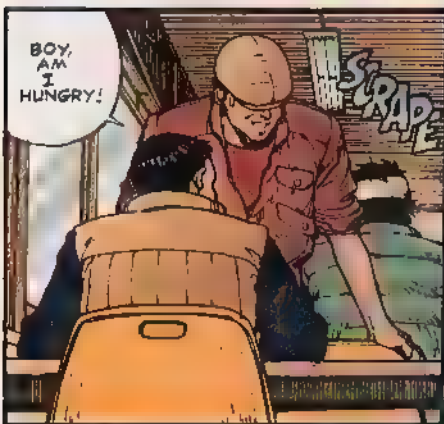
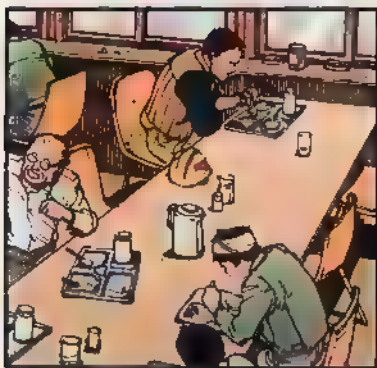


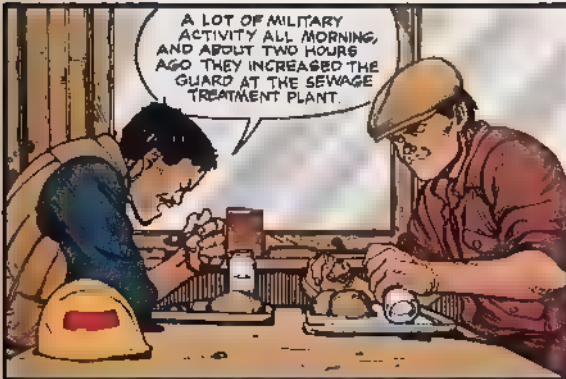
WHAT
HAPPENS
NEXT
IS UP
TO
THE
TWO
OF
THEM.



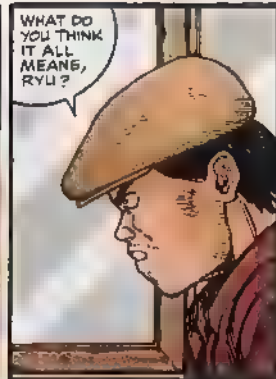




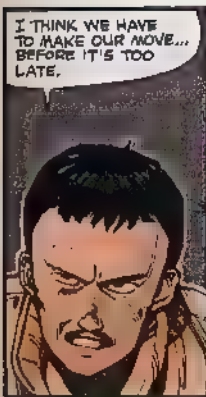




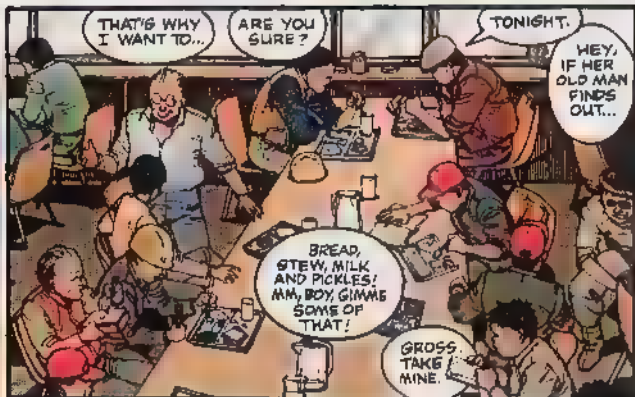
A LOT OF MILITARY
ACTIVITY ALL MORNING,
AND ABOUT TWO HOURS
AGO THEY INCREASED THE
GUARD AT THE SEWAGE
TREATMENT PLANT.



WHAT DO
YOU THINK
IT ALL
MEANS,
RYU?



I THINK WE HAVE
TO MAKE OUR MOVE...
BEFORE IT'S TOO
LATE.



THAT'S WHY
I WANT TO...

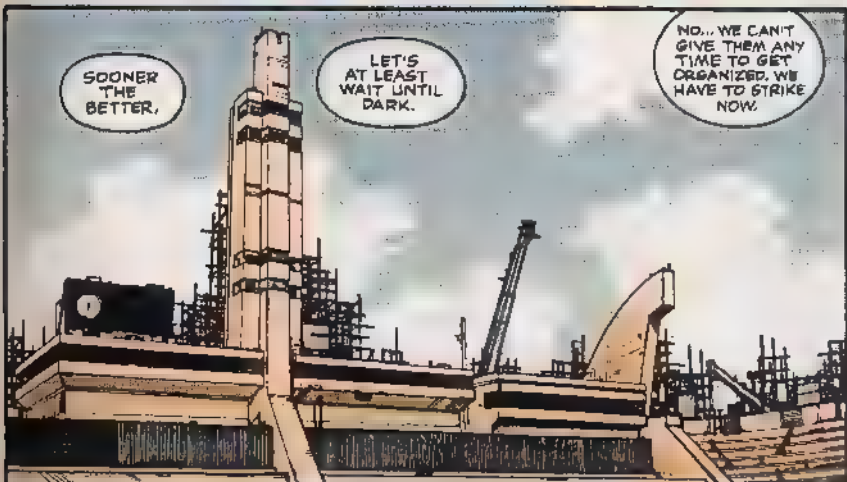
ARE YOU
SURE?

TONIGHT.

HEY,
IF HER
OLD MAN
FINDS
OUT...

BREAD,
STEW, MILK
AND PICKLES!
MM, BOY, GIMME
SOME OF
THAT!

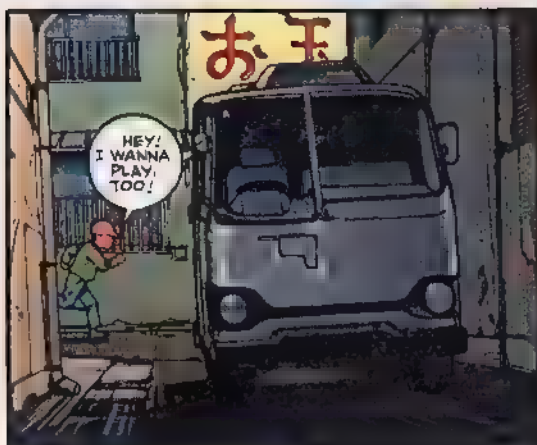
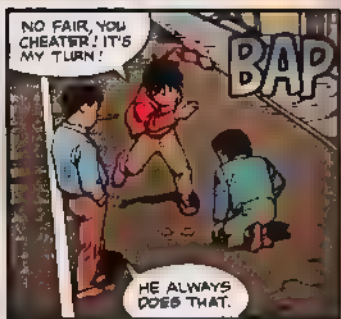
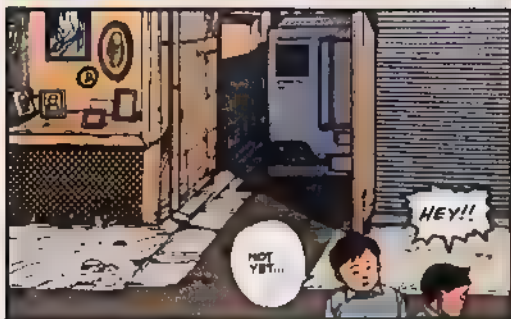
GROSS.
TAKE
MINE.

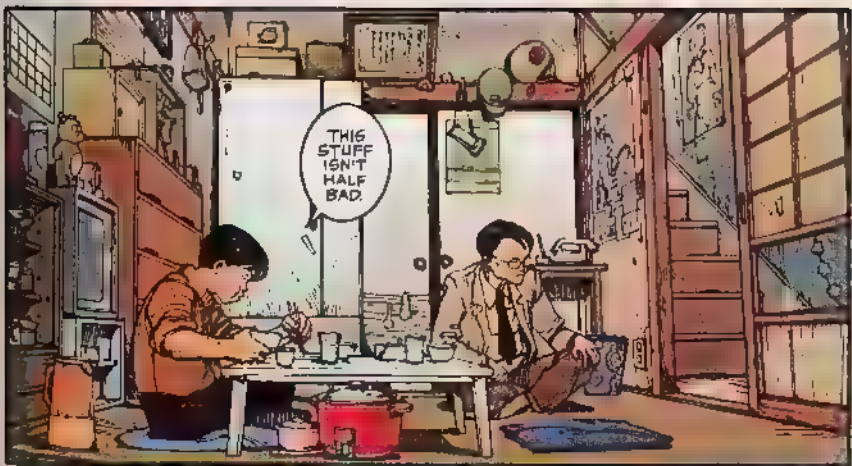
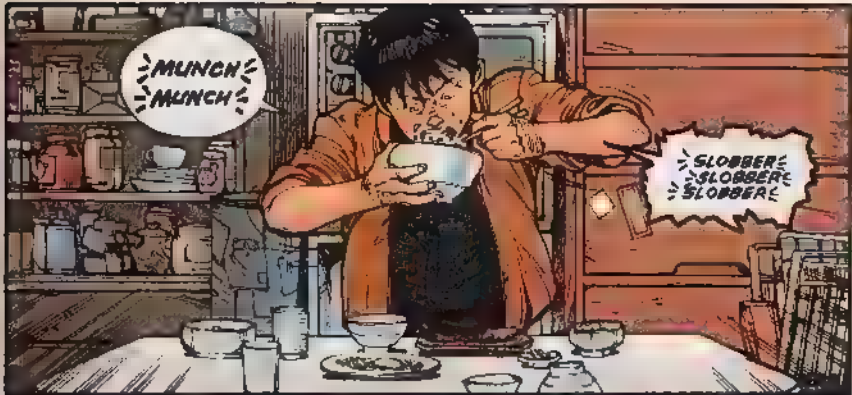


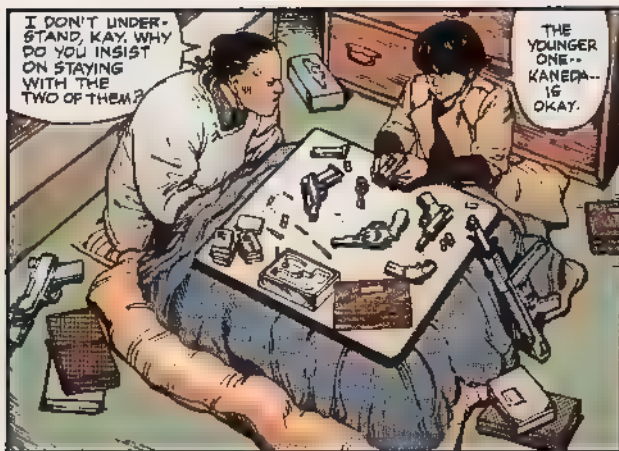
SOONER
THE
BETTER.

LET'S
AT LEAST
WAIT UNTIL
DARK.

NO... WE CAN'T
GIVE THEM ANY
TIME TO GET
ORGANIZED. WE
HAVE TO STRIKE
NOW.





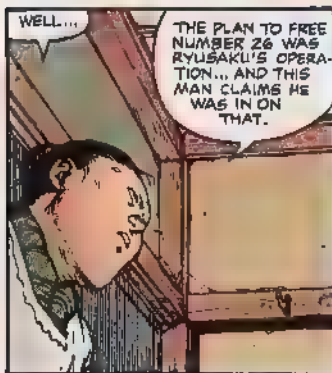


I DON'T UNDER-
STAND, KAY. WHY
DO YOU INSIST
ON STAYING
WITH THE
TWO OF THEM?

THE
YOUNGER
ONE--
KANEDA--
IS
OKAY.



AS FOR THE
GUY WITH THE
GLASSES AUNT
CHIYOKO...



WELL...

THE PLAN TO FREE
NUMBER 26 WAS
RYUSAKU'S OPERA-
TION... AND THIS
MAN CLAIMS HE
WAS IN ON
THAT.



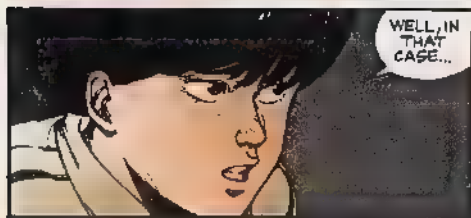
EXACTLY! SO, IF
RYU COULD MEET
HIM, WE'D FIND OUT
FOR SURE IF HE'S
WHO HE SAYS HE
IS.



IT'LL BE TROUBLE
YOU DON'T NEED
IF I LEAVE HIM
BEHIND AND HE
TURNS OUT TO
BE A PHONY...



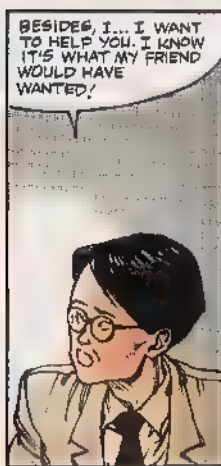
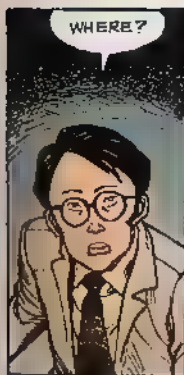
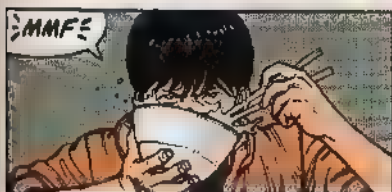
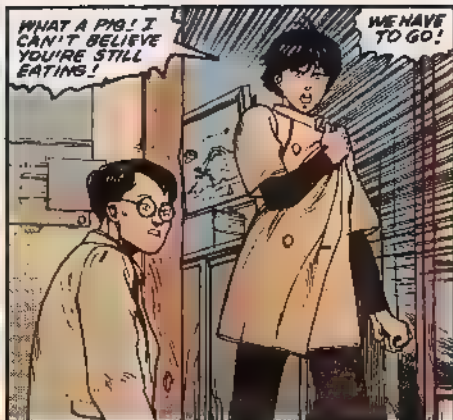
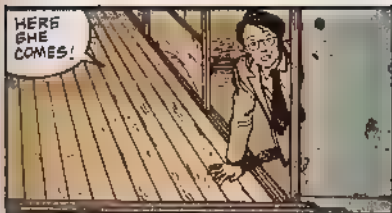
AND IF HE
IS...



WELL, IN
THAT
CASE...



... I WANT TO BE
THE ONE WHO
TAKES CARE OF
IT.





PLEASE DON'T
TAKE THIS WRONG.
I KNOW YOU
HELPED US...



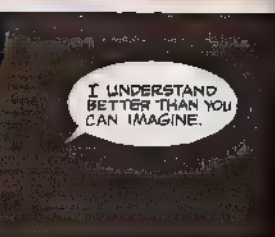
... BUT WE DON'T
TRUST YOU. WE
CAN'T AFFORD
TO.



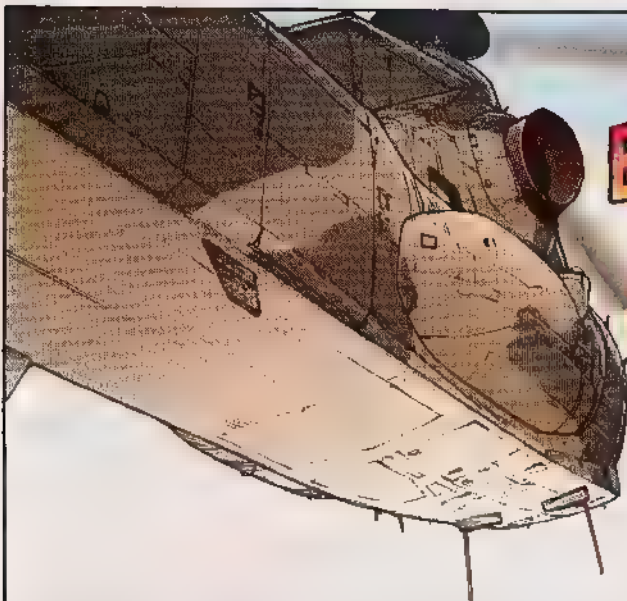
WE
CAN'T!!



THAT'S THE
WAY IT IS,
HUNH?



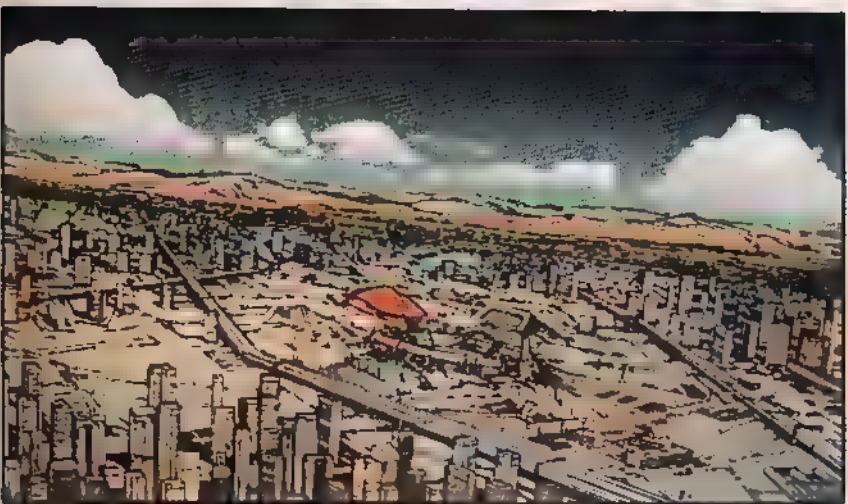
I UNDERSTAND
BETTER THAN YOU
CAN IMAGINE.

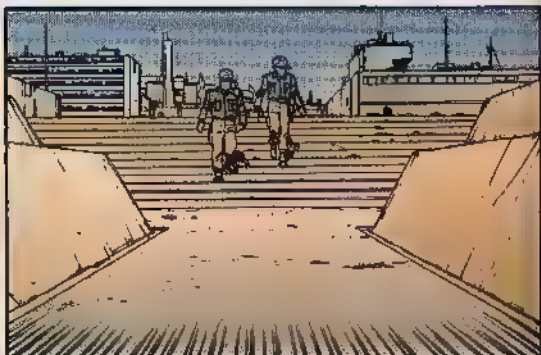


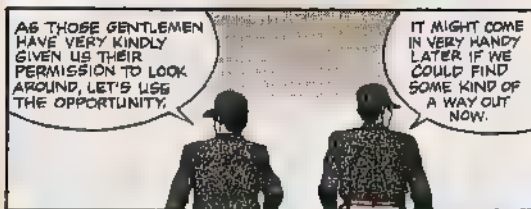
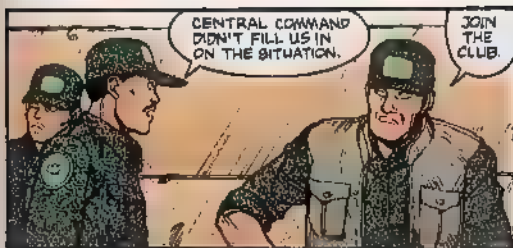
BUDDA

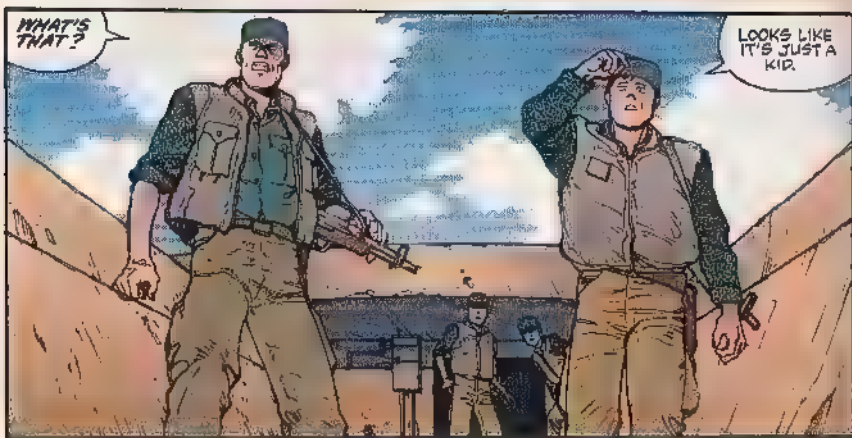
BUDDA

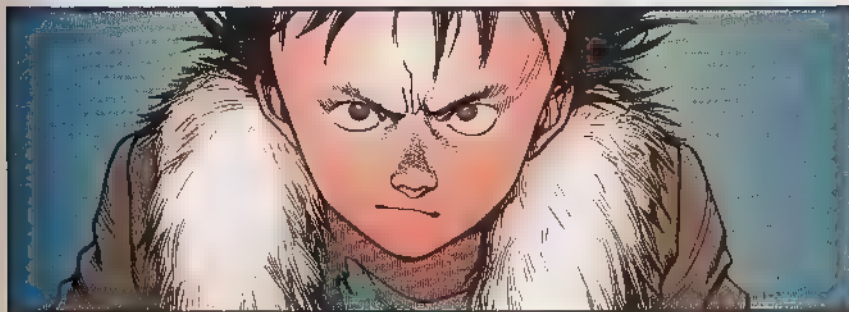
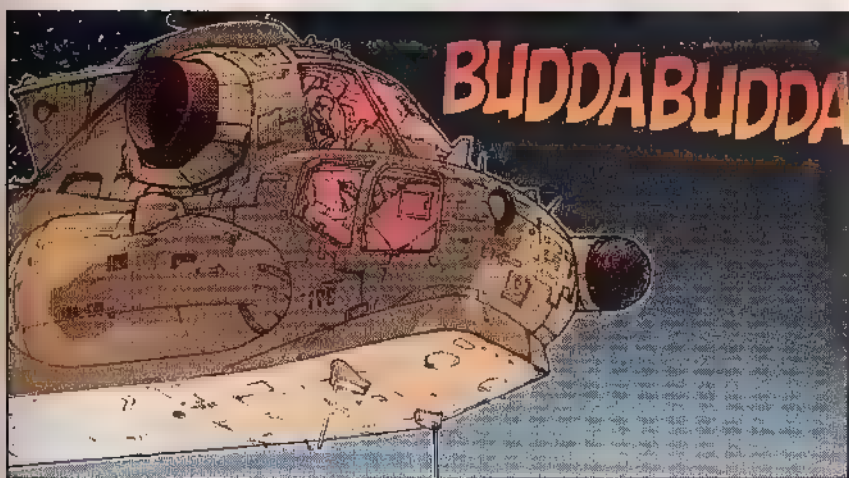
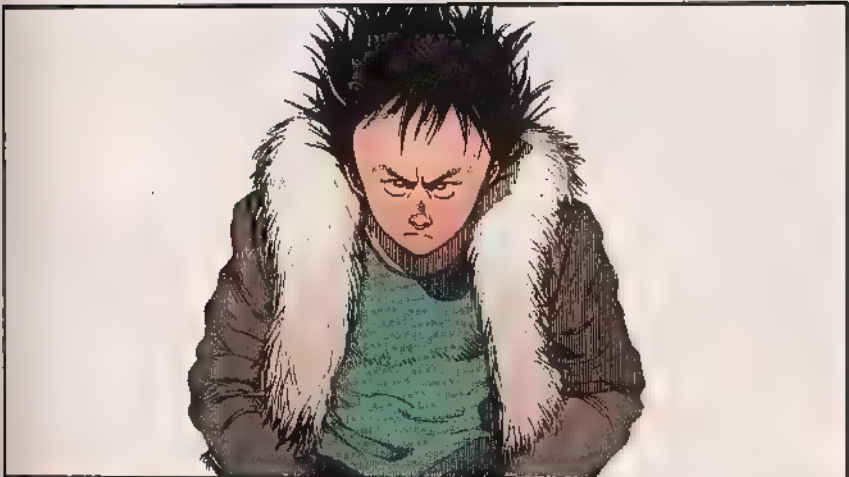
A stylized illustration of a cityscape. On the left, a large, futuristic structure with a prominent circular opening is visible. The city below is depicted with a dense grid of buildings. On the right, a tall, thin tower stands out. The sky is a warm, orange-brown color, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall style is reminiscent of mid-20th-century graphic design.

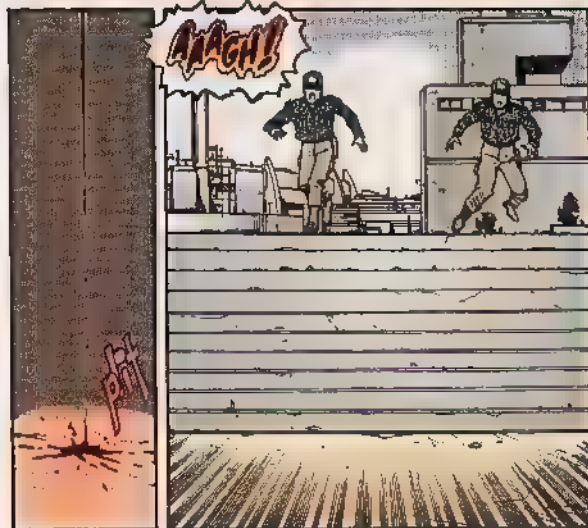
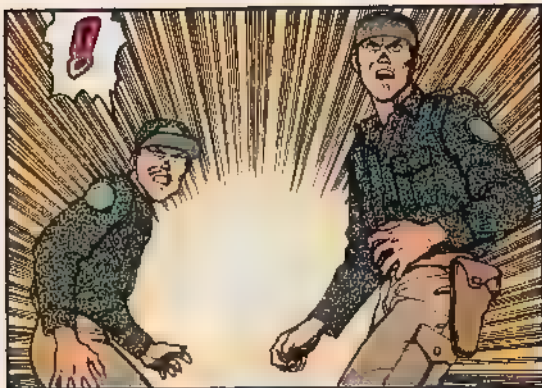


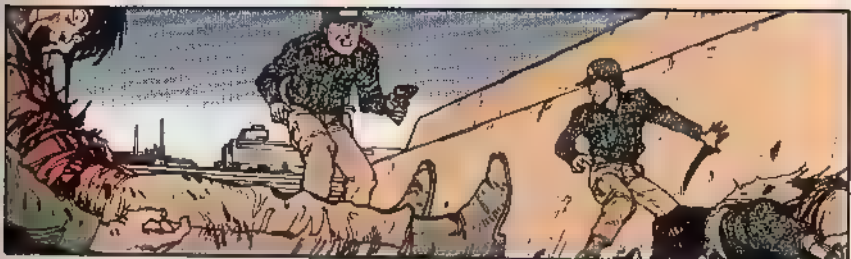


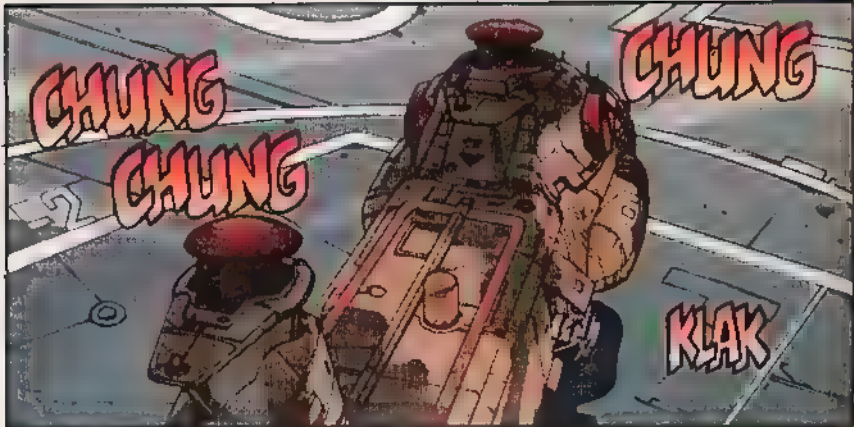






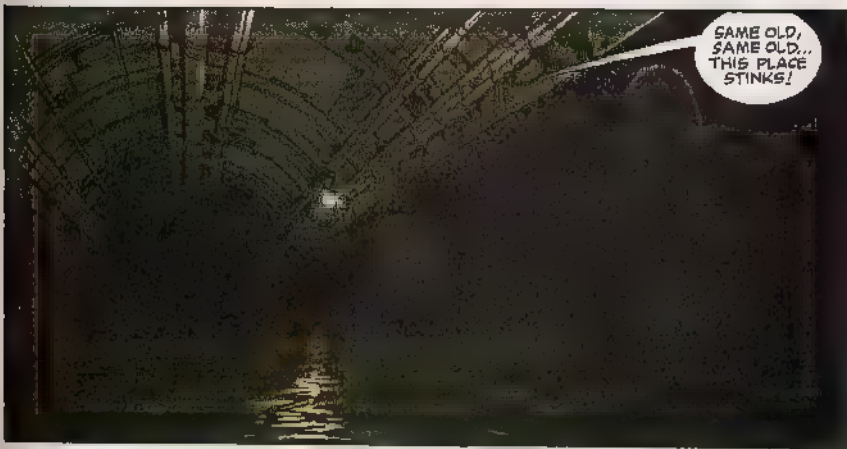








SQUEE
SQUEE



SAME OLD,
SAME OLD...
THIS PLACE
STINKS!



WHY DO WE
ALWAYS
HAVE TO
TAKE THE
SEWER?

OH,
SHUT
UP!

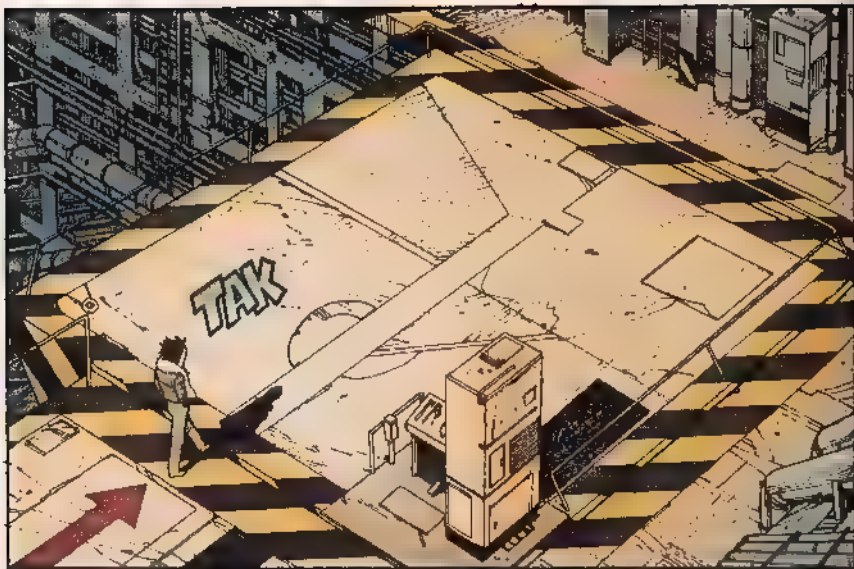


ARE YOU SENTIMENTALLY
ATTACHED
TO THIS
PLACE,
OR
WHAT?

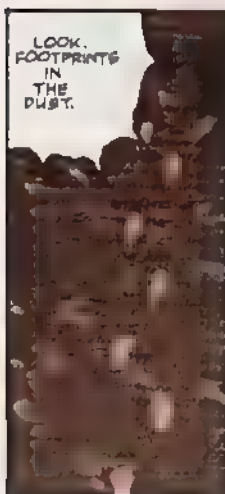
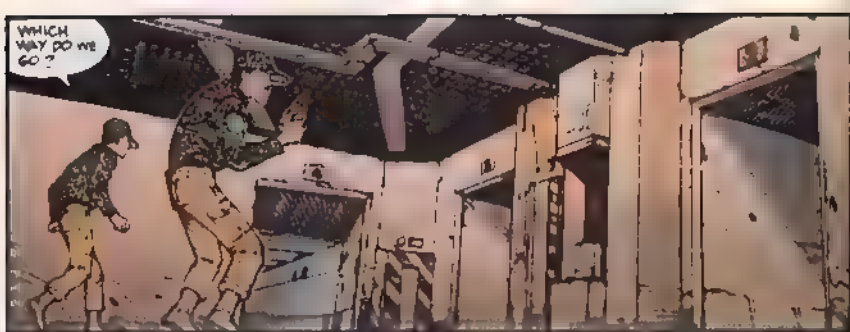
WE CAME THIS
WAY BECAUSE
IT'S THE ONLY
WAY I
KNOW.

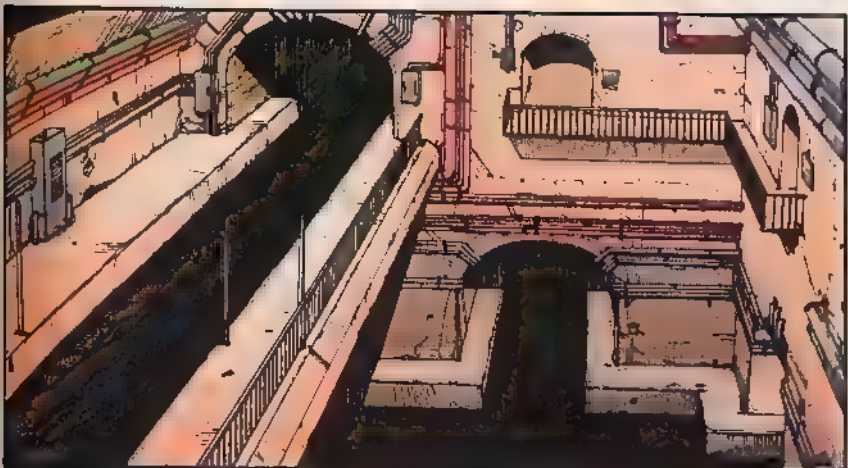
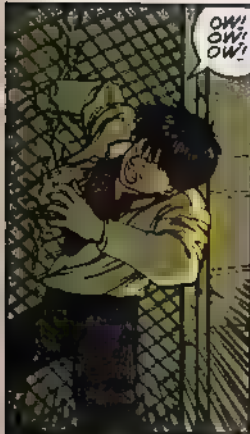


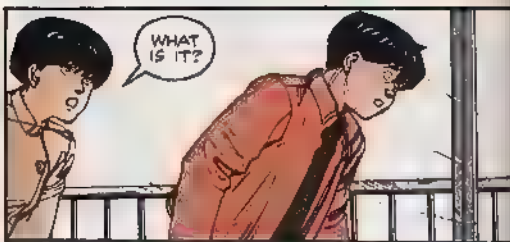
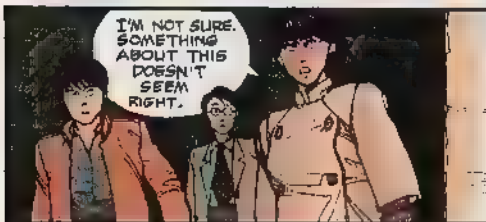
NOW
KNOCK IT
OFF!

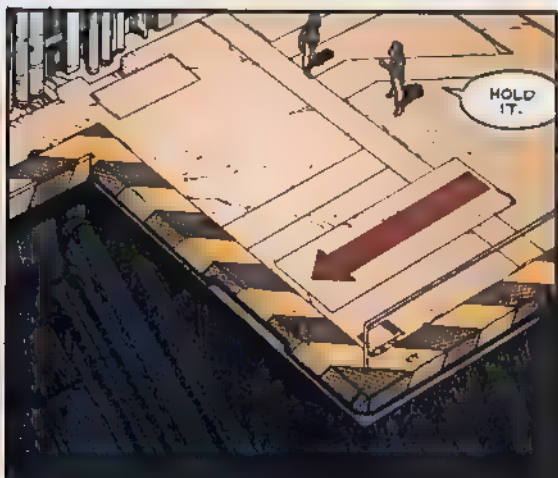
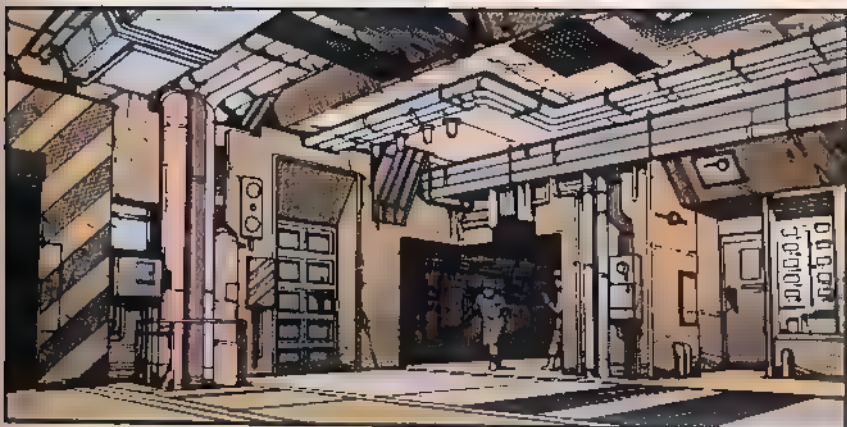
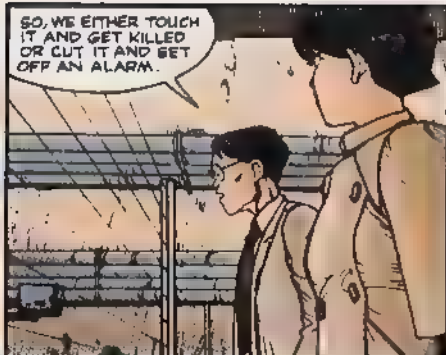
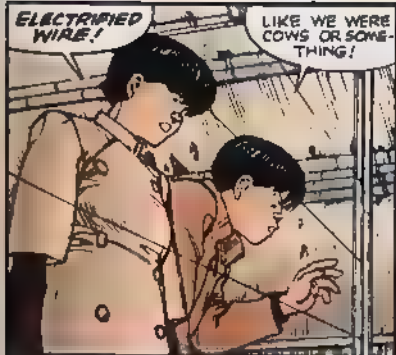


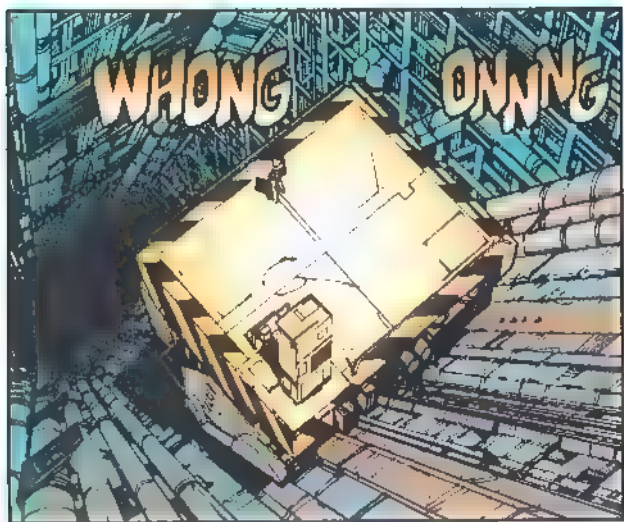
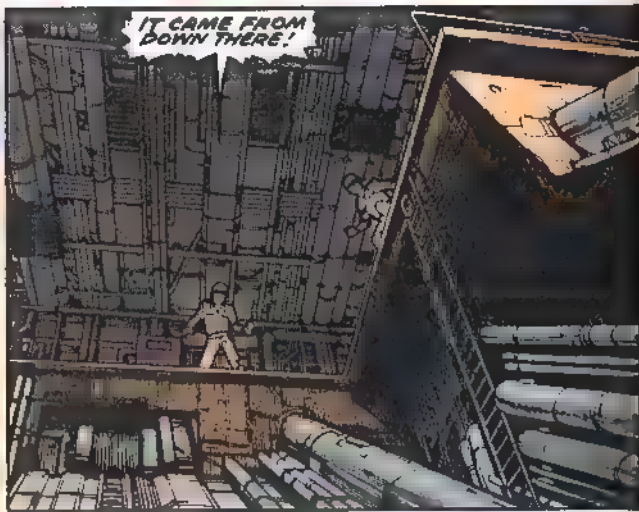
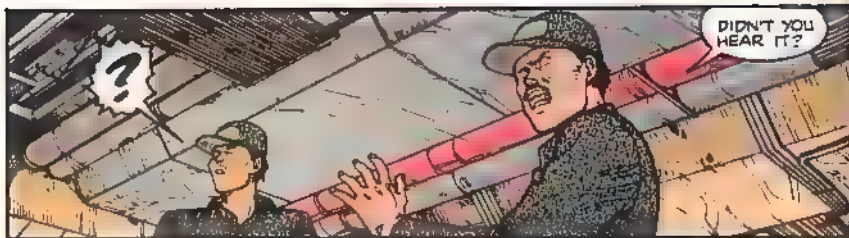


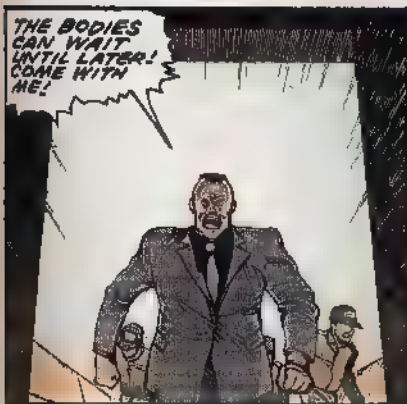
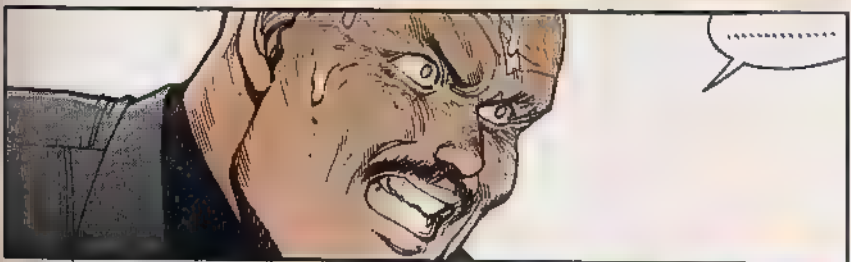


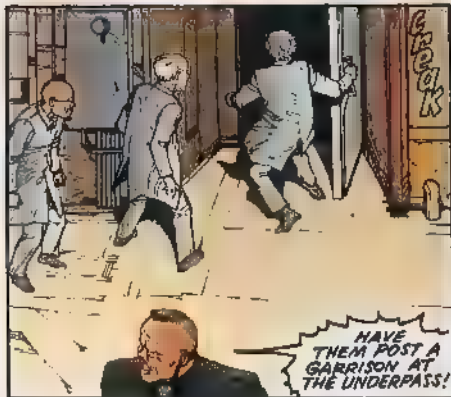
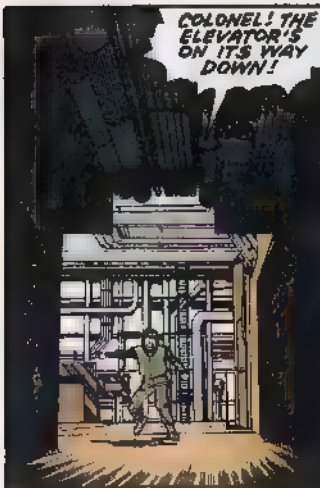










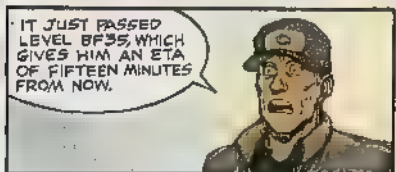
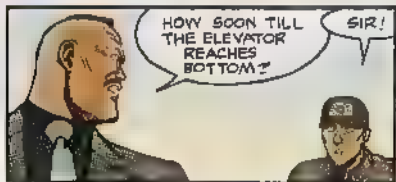
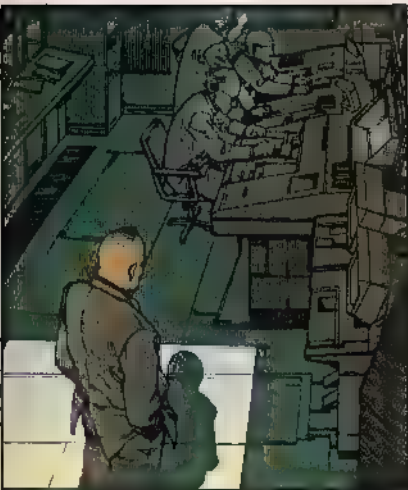


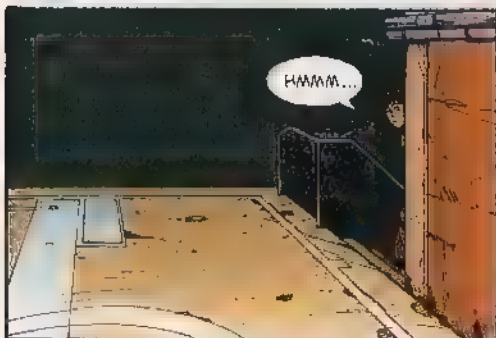
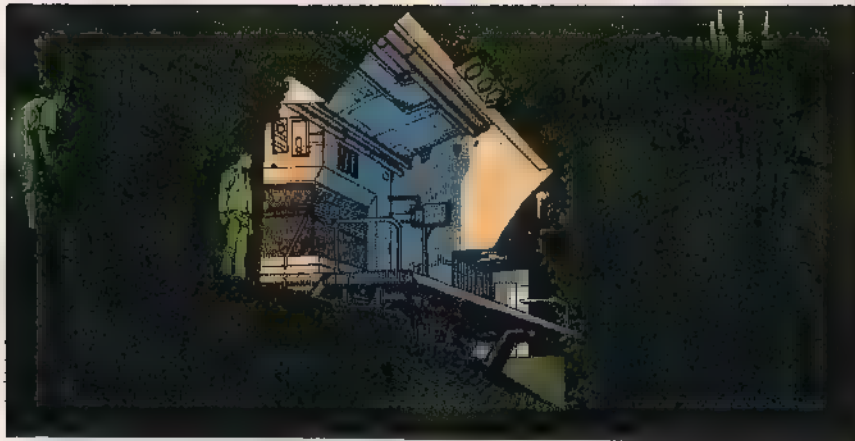
AWOOOOOOOOOOOO

Ryu!!

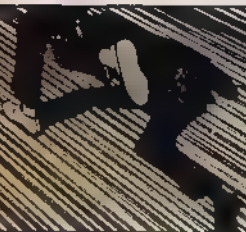
DON'T PANIC!

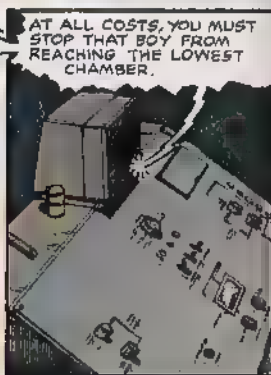
THEY'RE NOT
ONTO US YET.
WHOEVER FOUND
ALL THOSE BODIES
UPSTAIRS MUST
HAVE SET IT
OFF.





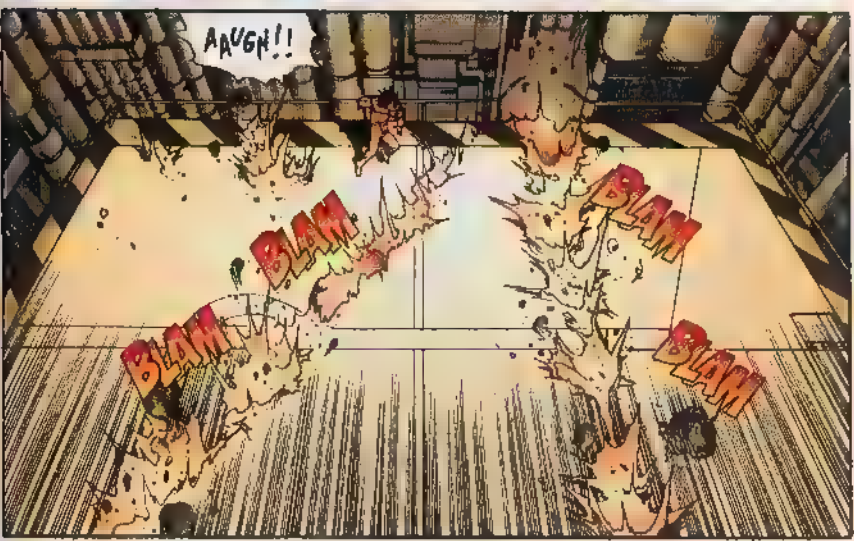
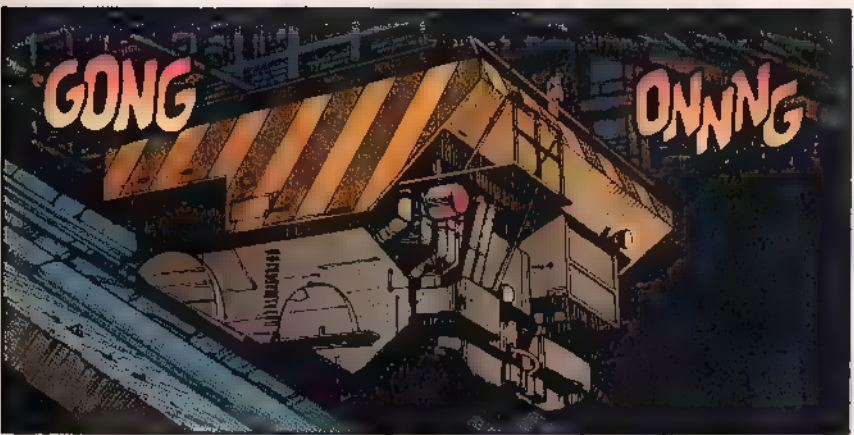
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK

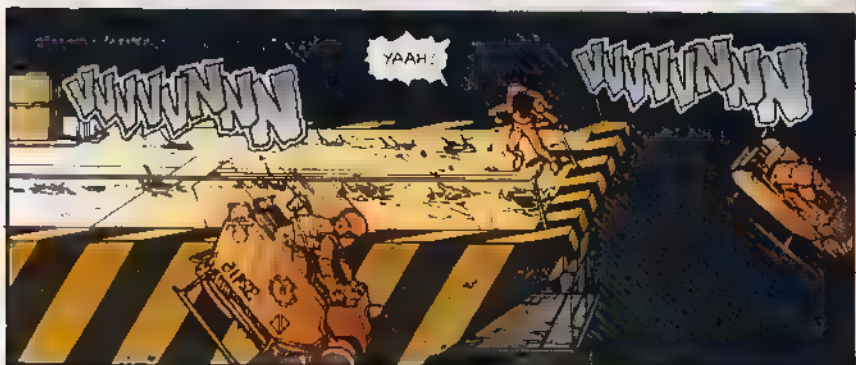
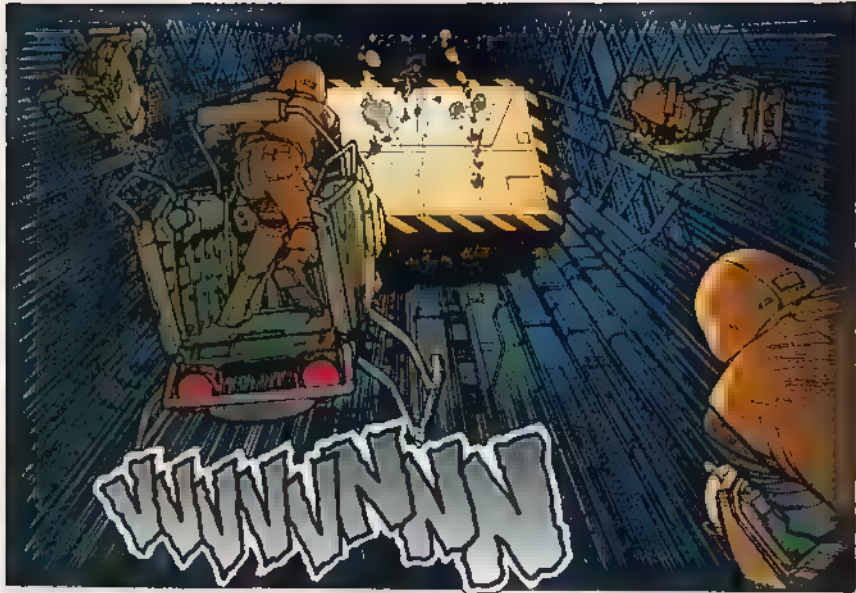




GONG

ONING





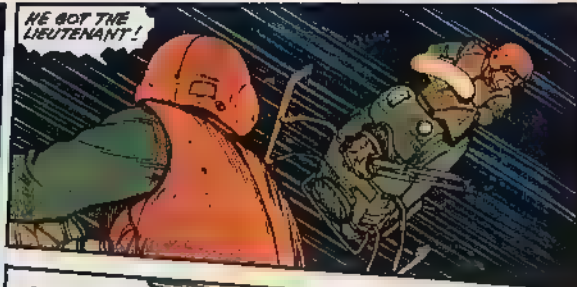
**LET'S
GO!!**

D_1/E_1

FWOOM



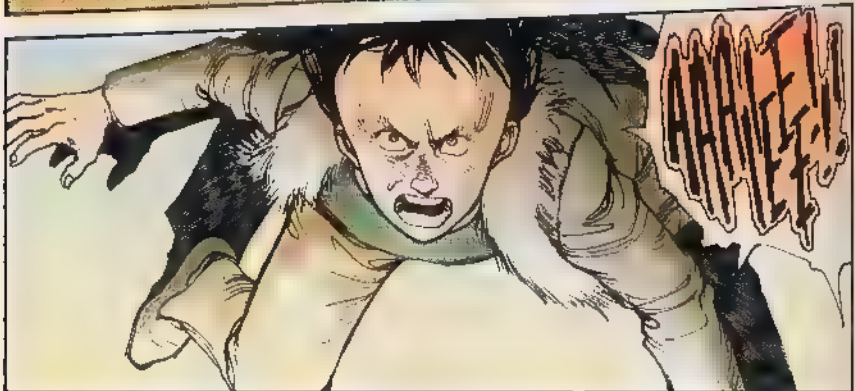
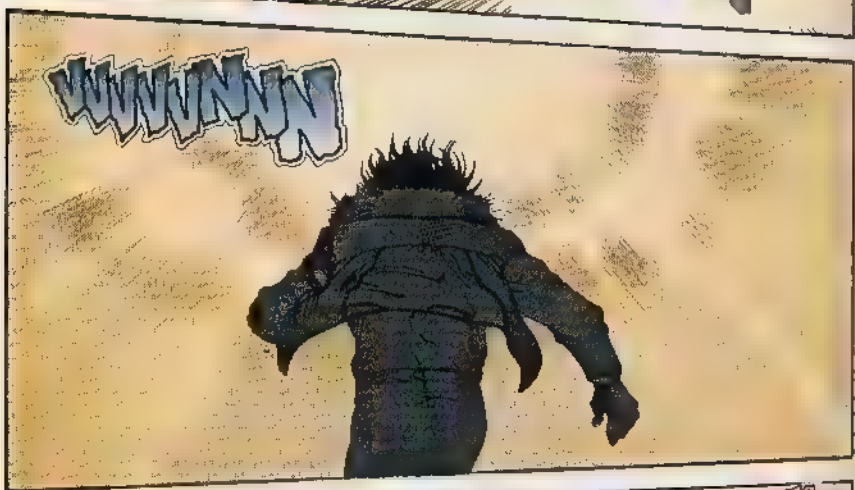
HE GOT THE
LIEUTENANT!



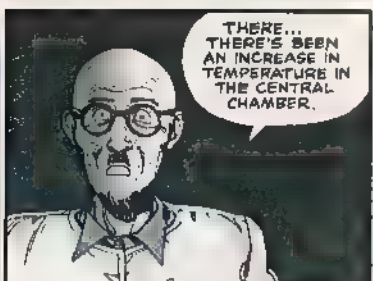
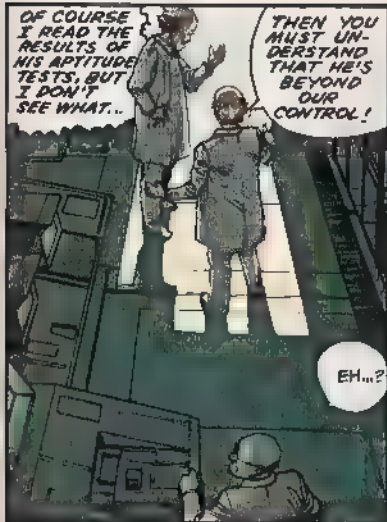
COME ON
AND
TRY IT,
ASSHOLE!



WUWUWUWU



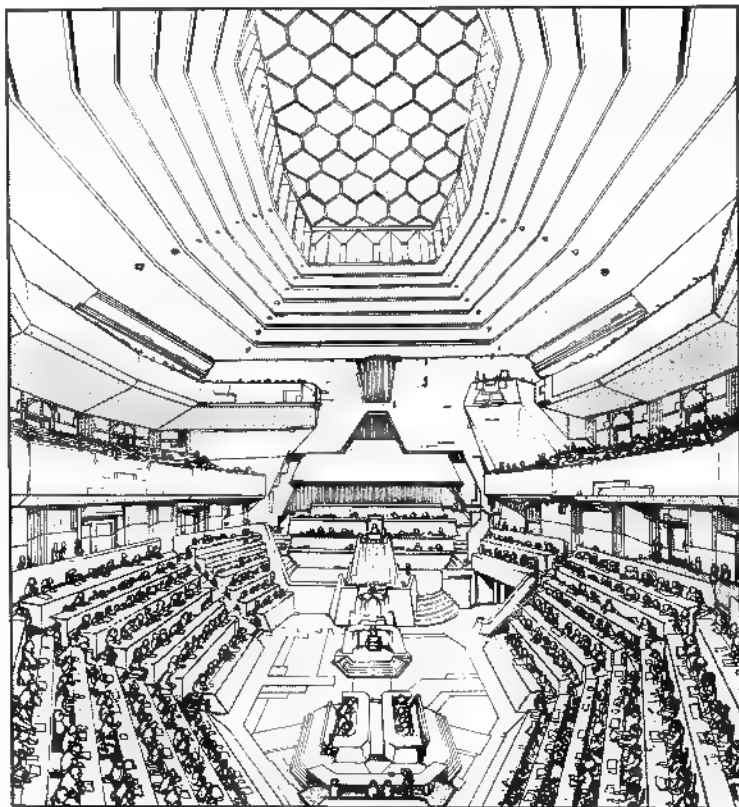
AAHHEE!

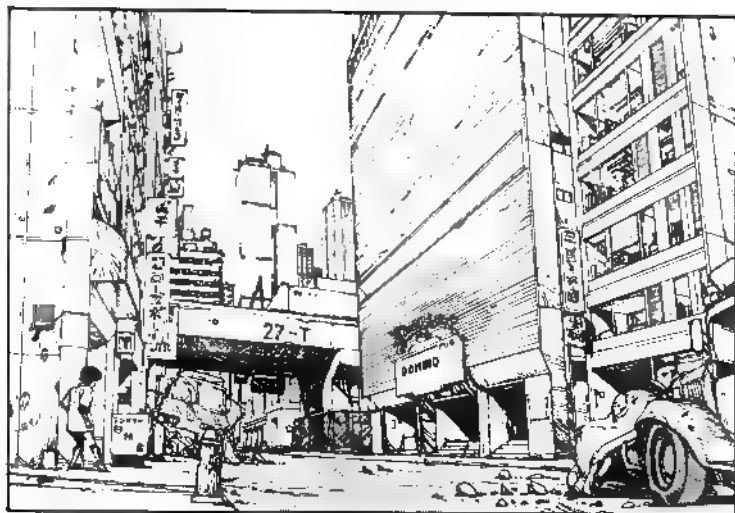
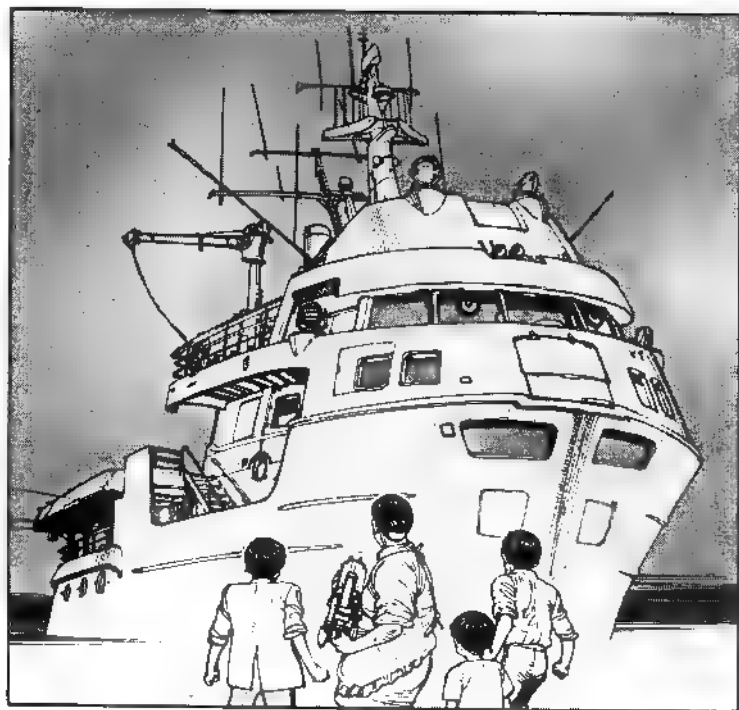


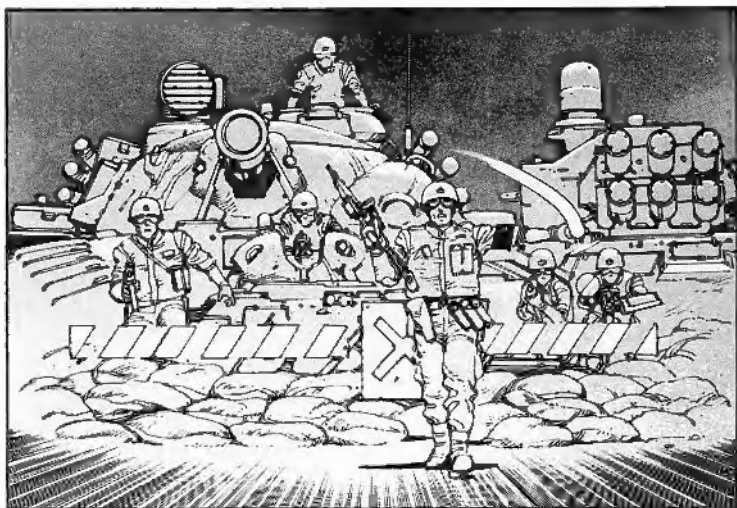
NEXT ISSUE: THE AWAKENING

OTOMO GALLERY

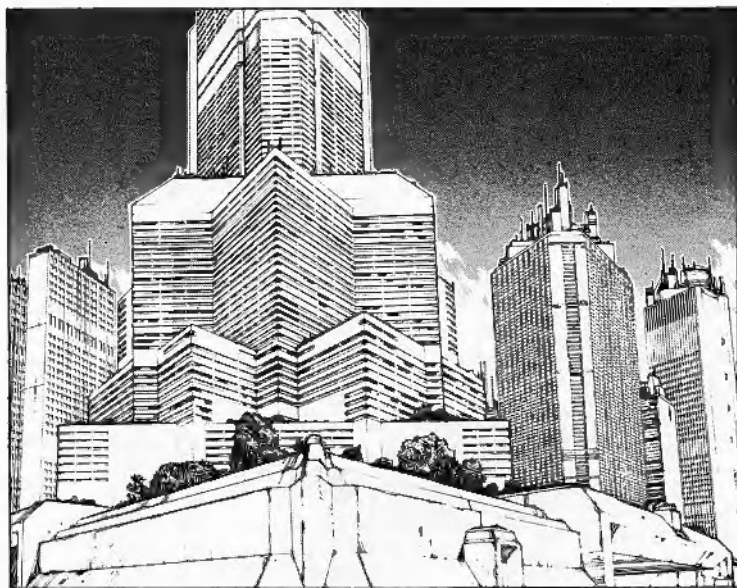
Reading *Akira*, it's natural to be swept along by its characters and story. Focused on these elements, it's also easy to overlook artist-creator Katsuhiro Otomo's many other virtues. For this gallery section, we've taken panels from up and coming issues that provide impressive examples of his approach to architecture and technical design. These elements are essential in conjuring the saga's convincing mood.







From the tanks and weaponry of a road block to the geometric array of city towers, Otomo uses this background material to make his science-fiction vision complete.



KATSUHIRO OTOMO

writer/illustrator

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chief assistant to Mr. Otomo

MAKOTO SHIOSAKI
SATOSHI TAKABATAKE
assistants to Mr. Otomo

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AKIRA SAITO
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MICHAEL HIGGINS
letterer

HARRY CANDELARIO
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LAURA DURRETT
editorial assistant, Epic edition

ARCHIE GOODWIN
editor, Epic edition

Escape. Somewhere on the streets of Neo-Tokyo in the year 2030 the young psychic-powered killer, Tetsuo, roams free of the secret government project where he learned of one possessing even stronger paranormal abilities than his own . . . AKIRA. Tetsuo now knows where this mysterious being lies in cryogenic sleep and means to find him. Meanwhile the anti-government agent, Kay, and Tetsuo's former friend, Kaneda, are fighting their way out of the same project, hoping to overtake Tetsuo. They have the behind-the-scenes aid of three of the project's mutant children and an unexpected ally among their pursuers. But their escape, like Tetsuo's, can only send them stalking into an even greater, more ominous confrontation.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA



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I love um

I buy um

I preserve um